



**ST MARTIN'S
SCHOOL**



**WHINLESS DOWN
ACADEMY TRUST**



**VALE VIEW
SCHOOL**

St Martin's School and Vale View School Local Governing Body Meeting

Thursday 27th November 2025

St Martin's Head Teacher: Mrs H Thompson Vale View Head Teacher: Mrs L Sprigmore

Minutes of the Local Governing Body Meeting held at St Martin's School on Thursday 27th November 2025, at 4pm.

Governors Present: Carole Bennett (Chair of Governors), Francesca Bushell (virtually), Kirsty Meakings, Chris Scoble (Vice Chair), Lisa Sprigmore (Vale View's Head Teacher), Helen Thompson (St Martin's Head Teacher), Andrew Wright

Others Present: Kelly Brown (CEO), Jacky Cadour (Assistant Headteacher at St Martin's School)

Governance Professional: Katie Banes

1	<p><u>Welcome, Introductions, Resignations and Apologies for absence</u> Governors were welcomed to the meeting. Billy Wilson was absent from the meeting and the meeting was confirmed to be quorate.</p>
2	<p><u>Annual Declaration of Business Interests Update/Pecuniary Interests Against this Agenda</u> Governors were given the opportunity to declare any new business interests and/or declare any pecuniary interests against this agenda. No declarations of business/pecuniary interests were declared.</p>
3	<p><u>Minutes from Term 6 LGB Meeting Published on the Website</u> The Governance Professional confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 26th June 2025 in Term 6, have been published on the school websites.</p>
4 4.1	<p><u>Approve Minutes from previous LGB Meeting in Term 1 –Thursday 16th October 2025</u></p> <p><u>Approval of Minutes</u> Previous minutes were made available to Governors prior to the LGB meeting. The minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting held on Thursday 16th October 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p><i>The Vice Chair of Governors signed the previous minutes to reflect this.</i></p>

4.2	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule staff wellbeing monitoring to take place later in the school year. <i>This will remain an action until this has been carried out later within the school year.</i> - Staff Governor vacancy to be advertised at St Martin's. <i>This has been completed and will be discussed further under agenda item number six.</i> - Absent Governors to re-sign their Register of Business Interest forms and Code of Conduct. <i>The Governance Professional ensured all relevant documentation is up-to-date.</i> - Consider new governor monitoring report format. <i>Governor monitoring report format was discussed. Governors and leaders agreed to combine the example from GovernorHub and some of the key questions from the existing monitoring report.</i> - Consider opportunities for staff to meet with Governors in a less formal capacity. <i>Informal governor and staff coffee and catch up to be organised. Information to be sent to Governors.</i> - FB to complete safeguarding training via Governor Hub. <i>FB confirmed she has completed safeguarding training.</i> - All Governors to confirm at the next meeting that they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. <i>Governors confirmed they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.</i>
5	<p><u>Statutory/National/Local Updates</u></p> <p>DfE Writing Framework 2025</p> <p>A summary of the new writing framework was shared Governors during the meeting, with a one-page summary available via Teams for future reference.</p> <p>The DfE Writing Framework (2025) provides non-statutory guidance to support high-quality writing teaching from Reception to Year 6. It aims to address national concerns around writing attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. It aims to address national concerns around writing attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.-quality writing teaching from Reception to Year 6. It aims to address national concerns around writing attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.</p> <p>Key Principles are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing is cognitively demanding: children must manage handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and ideas simultaneously. - Strong writing depends on secure transcription skills, (handwriting and spelling). Automating these reduces working-memory load so pupils can focus on composition. - Handwriting should be explicitly taught: grip, posture, letter formation, and fluency. - Spelling should build from phonics to morphology and etymology in a structured, progressive way. <p>Composition & Talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oral rehearsal supports vocabulary, sentence structure and idea development. - Grammar is taught in context, not through isolated drills. - Writing tasks should have clear purpose, audience and authenticity. - Extended writing should not be forced too early; quality over quantity in younger years. <p>Support for Struggling Writers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early identification of handwriting and spelling difficulties is essential. - Scaffolds include model texts, sentence stems, word banks, shared writing and dictation.

	<p>- A 'best-fit' approach to assessment gives teachers flexibility to make holistic judgements. - SEND learners need explicit, structured, and repeated practice.</p> <p>Leadership & Implementation</p> <p>- Consistent whole school approaches are vital. - Leaders should use the framework's audit tools to identify strengths and priorities. - High-quality CPD is required for sustained improvement. - Writing should be valued and celebrated across the curriculum. -school approaches are vital.</p>
<p>6 6.1 6.2</p>	<p><u>Governance</u></p> <p><u>Staff Governor Vacancy</u></p> <p>Although an advert had been placed for a Staff Governor at St Martin's, no interest had been shown. It was agreed that the advert would be extended further, with an opportunity to be held for staff to meet informally with Governors to discuss the role and opportunities this could provide.</p> <p><u>Planned Governor Monitoring</u></p> <p>The following monitoring opportunities were agreed to be carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next External Advisor visit (GC) – Monday 2nd March in the afternoon – CB. - Class Reviews to explore inclusion and multi vulnerabilities. 6th January and 9th January 2026 – FB. - Achievement/data analysis monitoring – 8th January and 6th March 2026 – KM. - Personal Development/Active Playground – 15th January 2026 – CS - Monitoring of Sports Premium to be planned in later in the academic year for monitoring with PE leads/Sports Coaches. - Well-being monitoring to be carried out after Christmas – CS. - Reading monitoring at St Martin's – KM. - Governors were invited to attend Sports Day at both schools. 22nd May – Sports Day at Vale View. 17th June in the afternoon for Key Stage Two at St Martin's.
<p>7</p>	<p><u>Headteacher Report</u></p> <p>The Headteacher Report was made available to Governors prior to the LGB meeting.</p> <p>Coaching for Key Stage Two was raised, with Governors asking if this would be developed with Key Stage One staff too. Governors were informed that the plan is to extend this into Key Stage One once the Key Stage Two group coaching has been established and evaluated for impact. Currently, the Assistant Headteachers and School Improvement Lead are trained to coach staff; meeting with teachers in Year 3-5 on a Monday every week, for for group coaching sessions at St Martin's. It is a great opportunity for shared CPD practices, review feedback and reflect on practices. Some staff are quite nervous about the process and it is still in its early stages. No official feedback has been collated yet. The three-weekly cycle will continue until Graham Chinsnell's next visit.</p> <p>The English team and leaders are due to meet next week to review spelling across the Trust and unpick the inconsistencies and areas for improvement required in spelling. It has already been highlighted that there are not enough opportunities within planning to practise spelling. Considerations for the use of a spelling scheme will be explored as a potential option. A Governor asked if there has been any feedback from parents with regards to spellings being set for home learning. Some positive feedback was initially received at St Martin's, with a few issues fine-tuned and home learning adapted to suit the needs. There is a plan to survey parents in March.</p> <p>Following a parent survey at Vale View a few years ago, Vale View moved to using the online platform, 'Purple Mash' to set work for pupils to complete, rather than the traditional homework book approach. If a spelling scheme is implemented, there could be some online spelling learning which could form part of home learning for pupils.</p>

	<p>Long term sickness at St Martin’s has had an impact on the senior leaders at both St Martin’s and Vale View, with senior leaders covering certain duties of absent staff. It was highlighted that this has had an impact on staff workload and time.</p>
8	<p><u>Curriculum Impact – Drawing Club</u></p> <p>The Trust EYFS Lead gave a brief presentation to explain what Drawing Club and Curious Quest is and how it impacts pupil learning.</p> <p>Greg Bottrill is the author and creator of Drawing Club. He believes that learning in early years should be fun and engaging.</p> <p>Drawing Club in Year R follows a four-part structure each week:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vocabulary introduction 2. Story sharing – new fiction or traditional tale weekly (rarely non-fiction/animations) 3. Teacher-modelled drawing using a set plan (characters, setting, adventure) 4. Drawing Club sessions – small groups create their own drawings and codes. <p>This approach has shown the children are more engaged and excited about their learning and encourages the development of imagination and writing skills across the year.</p> <p>It is designed to motivate children—particularly in EYFS—by moving away from traditional, formal writing tasks and instead blending naturally into child-initiated learning. As a result, children show significantly higher enthusiasm and engagement, with progress in writing developing more quickly.</p> <p>Drawing Club supports the teaching of key writing skills set out in the EYFS writing strategy, while also fostering imagination and creativity.</p> <p>Story Dough has just been introduced as a pre-cursor to Drawing Club. Story Dough focuses on making patterns which are linked to the handwriting scheme first, whilst still focussing on imagination and storytelling prior to Drawing Club.</p> <p>The approach strongly develops fiction and storytelling, with structured modelling helping children generate ideas and build narratives. However, writing in EYFS requires careful planning to ensure non-fiction and a range of writing genres are covered within the curriculum, as some genres are not covered by Drawing Club. Regular reviews of child-initiated learning take place to ensure breadth and progression within the EYFS curriculum.</p> <p>Curious Quest extends and builds upon the learning from EYFS into Year One by building on skills developed in EYFS. Curious Quests use a structured weekly focus, including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry each term, and imaginative hooks such as characters (e.g. Professor Clunk) to sustain engagement. Lessons progress from simple four-part invention stages (junk modelling, playdough, construction, drawing) to an eight-part lesson.</p> <p>Overall, Drawing Club and Curious Quests provide a strong transition from EYFS into Year 1, consolidating core writing basics such as sentence structure while significantly increasing exposure to stories and genres. The approach has been shown to spark greater imagination, creativity, and confidence in writing across early years learning.</p>
9	<p><u>Sports Premium</u></p> <p>The new Sports Premium plans for 2025-2026 for both schools were made available to Governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the focus within the Sports Premium plan has shifted, with an emphasis on girls and SEND. A Governor asked if there are any plans in place for these specific groups of children. Governors were informed that initial discussions have been held between leaders and the Sports Coach; there are</p>

	<p>plans to develop a girls' football league to equalise opportunities for both genders. Pupil surveys have led the initial discussions and developments for this.</p> <p>The LGB approved the new Sports Premium Plan for this academic year.</p>
10	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>Safeguarding audits have been carried out by the CEO, which included pupil voice and an audit of the Single Central Record (SCR). Health and Safety audits have also been carried out at both school by the Trust Business Manager (TBM). Actions from the audits are in the process of being carried out.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Committee have had their second meeting; new procedures have been implemented for working at heights and display risk assessments.</p>
11	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>LGB Governance Structure</p> <p>The CEO attended the LGB meeting to discuss and propose some changes to the structure of the Local Governing Bodies.</p> <p>The CEO stressed that this is an initial proposal and that no final decisions will be made without support from those involved.</p> <p>Since the CEO's appointment in 2024, governance arrangements have remained unchanged. However, over time, several issues have emerged that warrant discussion, particularly around efficiency and workload. The proposal is to retain the current Members and the Trust Board, but to move from separate Local Governing Bodies to a single Primary Board/Local Governing Body. This would better reflect how the schools already operate within the trust.</p> <p>The key reasons for this proposal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing workload for Headteachers and the Governance Professional, as current agendas are largely identical across schools. • Allowing governors to take on clearer lead roles while addressing shared priorities collectively. • Recognising that the three schools have similar priorities, curriculum approaches, and shared challenges, making joint governance more effective. • Aligning governance structures more closely with the way the trust already works in practice. • Improving separation of duties, particularly between the different levels of governance. <p>Discussions were held surrounding the current structure and number of meetings across the academic year. The proposed model would reduce this to around five three-hour meetings annually.</p> <p>The CEO explained that other local trust models are being reviewed, including sample agendas, with a focus on avoiding lengthy meetings that repeat the same content. A larger governing body would operate using committees to improve efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Additional points raised included strong recruitment to the Trust Board, succession planning for the future, and the recent recruitment of a Headteacher from Samphire STAR to the Trust Board.</p> <p>Any changes would require a review of delegation arrangements and terms of reference.</p> <p>Overall, there was recognition that the three schools already work very closely together and that a single governance structure could strengthen collaboration. Headteachers are supportive of the proposal, viewing it as a positive opportunity to reduce workload and adopt a smarter, more effective model of governance. All Governors present were also in agreement and supportive of the suggested changes, as it is felt it will benefit all involved and support workload.</p>

	The CEO will continue consultations, including a visit to Priory Fields Local Governing Body to ensure all views are considered before progressing any further.
12	<u>Confidentiality of Proceedings</u> No items of a confidential nature were raised during the meeting.
13	<u>Publication of Minutes</u> The next LGB meeting will be held on Thursday 5 th February 2026 at 4pm, at which these minutes will be approved and published.
<u>Action Points</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Schedule staff wellbeing monitoring to take place later in the school year.</i> - <i>Staff Governor vacancy at St Martin's School to be explored further via Governor/Staff Coffee & Catch Up.</i> - <i>Carry out monitoring visits as agreed in the LGB meeting.</i> 	

Minutes written by the Governance Professional, Katie Banes

Signed *C. Bennett* Date *5.2.2026*

Carole Bennett, Chair of Governors